

The Department of Commerce (DOC), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) is issuing a Broad Agency Announcement (BAA) to solicit cooperative research proposals that address research topics relative to Northeast fisheries. These include studying innovative approaches to: 1) collect biological information of harvested fish of specific species captured in statistical areas as requested by stock assessment scientists in the Northeast Fisheries Science Center, 2) collection and reporting of biological information of discarded fish captured during commercial and recreational fishing, and 3) collection of economic, social and cultural information from commercial and recreational fishermen, shore side fisheries workers, and other fisheries related people. The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), Northeast Regional Office (NERO), Northeast Cooperative Research Partners Program (NCRPP), in consultation with the Research Steering Committee of the New England Fishery Management Council, identified these research topics. A web site has been established to provide public access to the BAA package at <http://coopresearch.nero.noaa.gov>. Questions regarding proposal submission may be addressed via e-mail to [Michelle.R.Morales@noaa.gov](mailto:Michelle.R.Morales@noaa.gov) and shall reference this announcement. This announcement shall remain open for a period of one year from the date of publication. All responsible sources may submit a research proposal that will be considered by the Government. **Only research proposals submitted through July 14, 2006 will be considered at this time.** Only Contracting Officers are legally authorized to commit the government to an award under this announcement. All resulting awards shall be contracts governed by the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) and any applicable OMB Circular. Historically Black Colleges and Universities and Minority Serving Institutions are encouraged to apply. This action is unrestricted. The applicable NAICS is 541710, Research and Development in the Physical, Engineering, and Life Sciences. The size standard is 500 employees. All potential offerors are reminded that prior to the award of any contract the offeror shall possess a valid Dun and Bradstreet Number (DUN), Tax Identification Number (TIN), and be registered in the Central Contractor Registration (CCR) database. Questions on this announcement should be submitted in writing to Michelle Morales at [Michelle.R.Morales@noaa.gov](mailto:Michelle.R.Morales@noaa.gov).

**BROAD AGENCY ANNOUNCEMENT (BAA)**  
**NORTHEAST COOPERATIVE RESEARCH PARTNERS PROGRAM (NCRPP)**

**A. INTRODUCTION:** The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), Northeast Regional Office (NERO), Northeast Cooperative Research Partners Program (NCRPP), is seeking research proposals for projects involving collaboration among commercial and/or recreational marine fisheries participants, fisheries managers, and scientists. This BAA is issued under the provisions of paragraph 6.102(d)(2) of the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR), which provides for the competitive selection of basic and applied research proposals. Contracts awarded, based on responses to this BAA, are considered to be the result of full and open competition and in full compliance with the provisions of Public Law 98-396, "The Competition in Contracting Act of 1984." A web site has been established at <http://www.nero.nmfs.gov> to provide public access to the BAA package. A new BAA may be posted following expiration of this submittal period in support of any additional or continuing agency needs.

**B. BACKGROUND:**

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), Northeast Regional Office (NERO), Northeast Cooperative Research Partners Program (NCRPP), in cooperation with the Research Steering Committee (RSC) of the New England Fishery Management Council, anticipates that up to approximately \$700 thousand will be available for proposals addressing specified research topics for collaborative research. NMFS may award up to ten projects under this announcement. The topics for this solicitation, in no priority order, are listed below. No research proposals outside these areas shall be considered.

1. Research to study innovative approaches to accommodate fishing industry in the collection of biological information such as length, weight, age at length or fish tissue for use in aging and toxicology of commercially or recreationally harvested fish of specific species captured in specified statistical areas as requested by stock assessment scientists in the Northeast Fisheries Science Center. A website will be established to provide this list to proposal writers.
2. Research on development of innovative technologies or methods to accommodate the fishing industry in the collection and reporting of biological information of discarded fish captured during commercial and recreational fishing.
3. Research on innovative approaches to collect routine economic, social, and cultural information from commercial and recreational fishermen, shore-side fisheries workers, and other fisheries related people.
4. Development of educational programs to enhance understanding of marine fisheries science and management among the commercial and recreational fishing communities, fisheries and marine scientists, fisheries managers and others interested in marine resources.

### **C. OBJECTIVE:**

**(1) Technical Description:** This BAA solicits research proposals for projects that relate to the Northeast commercial and recreational fisheries. These include innovative techniques to collect biological information as they relate to the rebuilding of stocks, commercial and recreational discard of nontarget species, and social, economic, and cultural information from commercial and recreational fisheries participants. Research projects that develop and demonstrate improved strategies for collection of fishery dependent information (provided by fishery participants) are especially pertinent. Proposals should identify resources that are available to the offeror and list other resources that are requested from the NMFS funding.

If research is to be conducted outside the fishing regulations, an Exempted Fishing Permit (EFP) or Letter of Authorization (LOA) may be required (see Section F). The time necessary to acquire an EFP or LOA (approximately 8 weeks) should be included in the project timeline or period of performance.

**(2) Project Requirements:** The objective of these projects is to encourage collaborative research among commercial and/or recreational marine fisheries participants, fisheries managers, and scientists. Specific activities may vary with each project, but all projects should incorporate the following elements where applicable:

- Administrative and/or other necessary support for the project, include the training and equipping of study personnel for onboard vessel safety, where applicable.
- Adequate insurance coverage during research days at sea.
- Adequate communication with NMFS on project progress and accomplishment via interim progress reports (minimum of two), facilitation of project evaluation through site visits conducted by NMFS project monitors, and submission of a final report in accordance with a schedule negotiated with NMFS. Final reports will be required to pass a critical review and incorporate modifications according to review results before approval and release to the public. Additionally, final reports and all original or raw data shall be provided to NMFS. Portals or links may be posted on the NCRPP internet web site to provide public access to cooperative research reports and data subsequent to technical and management review.

### **D. PROPOSAL SUBMISSIONS:**

Ten copies of each research proposal **must be received by the close of business (4:30 p.m.) on Friday, July 14, 2006**. Submit proposals to: Eastern Region Acquisition Division, 200 Granby Street, Suite 815, Attention: Michelle Morales, Norfolk, VA 23510. A technical review panel convened by NMFS will review proposals. Based on this review, the Contracting Officer may:

1. Invite the offering contractor to enter into a negotiation and contracting agreement with NMFS;

2. Fund all or part of the proposal, as presented, without modifications or negotiations unless the offering contractor states that a partial award is not acceptable in its proposal; or
3. Choose not to fund the proposal.

#### **E. PROPOSAL PREPARATION AND FORMAT:**

**Offerors shall submit two (2) paper and two (2) electronic (CD-ROM) copies of its proposal.** Since this is a competitive solicitation, NOAA employees are not permitted to assist in the preparation of a proposal. Proposals shall include the following at a minimum, but are not limited to these elements. In terms of length, proposals are limited to 15 pages, single spaced, on 8 ½ x 11 inch paper, for items 1-8 below. Items 9 and 10 are not subject to this page limitation. Research proposals that do not include all of the following elements may not be further considered for award.

1. Project Title
2. Project goals and objectives
3. Value of project to fishery conservation and management
4. Statement of work
  - a. Project design (Proposals involving field research must include, as applicable, the information requested in Section F, Exempted Fishing Permits)
  - b. Vessel, insurance and equipment needs, as applicable
  - c. Personnel and partnerships
    - i. personnel resources already available (identify persons involved in the conceptualization, development, and drafting of the proposal)
    - ii. fishing industry and/or conservation groups, science and management participation (letters of interest from potential industry, science and management partners)
5. List of equipment, facilities and other infrastructure contributed by project participants or partner organizations. List of equipment not contributed, i.e., to be purchased for use in the funded project.
6. Anticipated timeline of project including: a) start date, b) milestones, and c) completion date, including submission of deliverables (data, manuscripts, outreach products, and/or final report). If the research is bound by seasonal availability of resources, this must be stated and reflected in the project timeline or proposed period of performance.
7. Expected products and specific deliverables (at a minimum, semi-annual progress reports, data and a final results report will be required along with a completion report to be delivered by the contract end date)
8. Estimated budget to conduct the project (include a detailed breakdown of cost elements)
9. Contact information of principal investigator and primary partners
10. Supporting documentation relevant to proposed research: resumes, cooperative research agreements, contracts, etc.
11. Provide past performance information that includes the scope of research, contract or grant number, Government point of contact (name, agency and phone number), and dollar value.

## **F. EXEMPTED FISHING PERMITS AND LETTERS OF AUTHORIZATION:**

Vessels conducting certain types of research may be required to obtain an Exempted Fishing Permit (EFP) or a Letter of Authorization (LOA). In order to assist NMFS in determining whether or not the proposed research would require an EFP, researchers need to fully address the following, as may be applicable:

1. Location and Time of Year (specific time of year and areas where fishing will occur e.g. Loran C or Global Position System (GPS) coordinates, 10 minute squares, closed areas, include map, if possible);
2. Gear Type (trawl including mesh size, pot, gillnet, dredge, acoustic gear, including frequency and amplitude);
3. Fishing Effort including number of vessels, number of tows, length of tows, number of pots, and soak time (duration of tended gear, sampling frequency, etc.);
4. Catch as estimated species composition and amount (estimated pounds or numbers of marine species that may be captured or killed, including directed catch and discarded organisms);
5. Regulatory Exemptions (identify any known or potential regulatory exemptions that may be necessary in order to conduct the proposed research, including exemptions from A or B days-at-sea (DAS), closed areas, closed seasons, minimum fish or mesh size, possession limits, etc.).

Anticipated exempted permits should be specified. In such situations, applicants are strongly urged to contact the Sustainable Fisheries Division at the NMFS Northeast Regional Office, 978-281-9331, in advance of proposal submission. Additionally, applicants may access Experimental Fishing Permit (EFP) application materials on the NMFS web pages <http://www.nero.nmfs.gov/ro/doc/600745.htm> or <http://www.nero.nmfs.gov/ro/doc/EFP.htm>.

## **G. OUTREACH MATERIALS:**

The production of any outreach material generated as a result of the contract for research including, but not limited to, brochures, pamphlets, posters, newsletter articles, and videos shall be coordinated and approved by the NMFS Northeast Regional Office Outreach Program.

## **H. DATA SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS AND FORMAT:**

Successful applicants will be required to submit project results in electronic form in accordance with data collection protocols of the Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program (ACCSP) and/or other data base formats, as may be required by the NMFS NCRPP or Northeast Fisheries Science Center.

The Federal Government provides guidelines, regulations, and legal authorities governing the

administration of contracts and grants. The White House Office of Management and Budget (OMB) published circulars which provide consistency and uniformity in agencies' administration of grants. Similarly, the Federal Acquisition Regulations (FAR) is the primary legal authority which provides guidance and rules that govern the administration of contracts with the Federal Government. The following world-wide-web sites provide pertinent and current information published by the OMB, The Federal Register (FR), Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), and the Office of the Law Revision Counsel of the U.S House of Representatives:

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants/index.html>  
<http://www.gpoaccess.gov/fr/index.html>  
<http://www.gpoaccess.gov/cfr/>  
<http://www.uscode.house.gov/lawrevisioncounsel.php>

Access to the FAR and associated Federal Acquisition Circulars (FAC) can be found through the Government Contracting Institute:

<http://www.gcionline.net>

Part 35 of the FAR (Research and development contracting) presents differences among grants, contracts, and cooperative agreements.

### **Data Quality Act and Cooperative Research Results**

The use of cooperative research information in developing regulations and management actions falls under the Data Quality Act (DQA). All information presented and used by Federal agencies must receive rigorous technical review. Additionally, NCRPP research must receive an industry review to ensure that the results, if determined to be scientifically valid and defensible, make management sense from an administrative, economic, sociological, and law enforcement perspective.

The Data Quality Act (and the Information Quality Act) were enacted as Section 515 of the Treasury and General Government Appropriations Act of 2001 (PL 106-544, H.R. 5658). The section directs the OMB to issue government-wide guidelines that “provide policy and procedural guidance to Federal agencies for ensuring and maximizing the quality, objectivity, utility, and integrity of information (including statistical information) disseminated by Federal agencies.”

OMB published final guidelines to implement Section 515 in the Federal Register on September 28, 2001 (66 Fed. Reg. 49718 - <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/fedreg/reproducible.html>).

### **FAR-General Definitions and Rights to Data**

The Federal Acquisition Regulations (FAR) provides definitions of data relative to contracts between the Federal Government and other organizations. The FAR also provides specific language and clauses on the rights in data, copyright, subcontractor rights and responsibilities in data, limited rights notices, commercial computer software and restricted rights, Small Business Innovative Research (SBIR) contract under the Small Business Innovation Development Act (1982), technical data declaration, revision, and withholding of payments and other pertinent issues associated with contracts and data deliverables (FAR-SUBPART 52.227-14 to 52.227-23).

The FAR defines computer software as computer programs, computer data bases, and documentation thereof. The definition of data, as used in the FAR clauses, is: “recorded information, regardless of form or the media on which it may be recorded.” Under the FAR definitions, the information that is incidental to contract administration, like financial accounting, cost or pricing, or business management information, is excluded from the definition of technical data. “Technical data,” as used in the FAR clauses, means information of a scientific or technical nature (other than computer software programs). “Unlimited rights,” as used in the FAR clauses, means the right of the Federal Government to use, disclose, reproduce, prepare derivative works, distribute copies to the public, and perform publicity and display publicly, in any manner and for any purpose, and to have or permit others to do so.

The FAR provides clauses that define copyright or protection of data by the contractor (FAR-SUBPART 52.227-14(c)). The contractor may claim copyright of data subsisting in scientific and technical articles published in academic, technical, or professional journals, symposia proceedings or similar works, based on or containing data first produced in the performance of its contract with the Federal Government.

The Northeast Cooperative Research Partners Program may agree to limit public access to certain research or technical data for a predetermined period of time, to allow principal investigators, graduate students, or others adequate opportunity to publish or present data in avenues as presented above.

## **I. PROPOSAL EVALUATION CRITERIA:**

A review panel convened by NMFS will evaluate proposals by assigning scores up to the maximum indicated for each of the following criteria. The final selecting decision shall be made considering the type and scope of the research, the timing of research to be conducted, the geographical distribution of research activities, and other Fisheries policy goals and objectives. The following criteria will be used:

1. Importance and/or relevance and applicability of the proposed project: This criterion ascertains whether there is intrinsic value in the proposed work or relevance to NOAA, Federal, regional, state, or local activities. Researchers should provide a clear definition of the problem, need, issue, or hypothesis to be addressed. Specific reference to a fishery

management plan or research topic listed above is highly recommended. The proposal should describe its relevance to the research priorities and detail how the data gathered from the research will be used to enhance the understanding of the fishery resource or contribute to the body of information on which management decisions are made. (25 points).

2. Technical or scientific merit: This criterion assesses whether the approach is technically sound or innovative, if the methods are appropriate, and whether there are clear project goals and objectives. The approach to be used, including description of fieldwork, theoretical studies, and laboratory analysis to support the proposed research, should be clearly specified. (25 points)
3. Collaborative value: This criterion assesses whether the research promotes collaboration between fishermen and scientists, including a strong research partnership that is highly likely to succeed and has a high degree of pro-active participation by fishermen in the design and conduct of research. (20 points)
4. Project costs: This criterion evaluates the cost or price to determine if it is realistic and commensurate with the project needs and time frame. Cost-effectiveness of the project will be considered. Economic and budget projections should be quantified, to the extent possible. (20 points)
5. Qualifications and experience of project participants: This criterion assesses whether the applicant, and team members, possess the necessary education, experience, training, facilities, and administrative resources to accomplish the project. (5 points)
6. Past Performance: The past performance of offerors who have previously been awarded research contracts or grants shall be considered for determining awards under this announcement. (5 points)

## **J. CLARIFICATIONS:**

Questions or comments regarding proposed projects described in this notice should be submitted in writing to Michelle Morales via e-mail at [Michelle.R.Morales@noaa.gov](mailto:Michelle.R.Morales@noaa.gov).